

MINUTES OF THE  
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

January 28, 1999  
MAG Office  
302 North First Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Debbie Kohn, Avondale, Chairperson	Jenny Sheppard for Jim Hull, Mesa
Sondra Finkbeiner, Cave Creek	Ralph Spencer for Sandy Teetsel, Peoria
Bill Mitchell, Chandler	Greg Binder, Phoenix
Peter Putterman, Fountain Hills	Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh, Scottsdale
*Glenn Keough, Gilbert	John Laue, Tempe
*Steve Jones, Glendale	*Ralph Velez, Tolleson
Jack Blonski, Goodyear	*Sabra Mousavi, ADOT
Horatio Skeete, Litchfield Park	Eddie Caine, RPTA
Cary Parker for Danica Bunjevic, Maricopa County	

\*Members neither present nor represented by proxy

OTHERS PRESENT

Carl Stephani, Gila Bend	Audrey Skidmore, MAG
Mark Goldstein, IRC	Jeff Wood, Norstan
Harry Wolfe, MAG	Glenn Stoneman, Norstan
Heidi Pahl, MAG	Brad Hartig, City of Scottsdale
Rita Walton, MAG	

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m. by Chairperson, Debbie Kohn.

2. Approval of Minutes of December 9, 1998

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh commented that agenda item 3, Announcements, should state that she explained that the 4 Pictoretel VTLs were acquired as part of negotiations with Scottsdale's PBX vendor and not that she suggested that other cities look into this kind of agreement with their vendors. It was moved by Eddie Caine, seconded by Peter Putterman and unanimously recommended to approve the December 9, 1998 meeting minutes as amended.

3. Announcements

Debbie Kohn announced that a public hearing was held for the City of Avondale's draft Telecommunications Strategic Plan and that it would be considered by the Council on February 16, 1999.

Debbie Kohn also announced that the MAG Transportation Review Committee (TRC) will be allocating funds for the various transportation projects submitted. She stated that the Videoconferencing Project may receive approximately \$1 million. Ms. Kohn mentioned that the top 2 or 3 videoconferencing projects submitted to the TRC are likely to be funded.

Mark Goldstein announced that on Thursday February 4, 1999, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., MAG will be hosting the Valley Vision 2025 Public Utility/Governance Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Goldstein mentioned that he would be moderating a telecommunications session with panelists John Badal, Carder Hunt, Ivan Johnson, Carl Kunasek, and Bill Stack. He stated that the meeting is open to the public and that a Telecommunications Policy white paper would result from the session.

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh asked if there were any legislator panelists. Mark Goldstein said that the legislators were unavailable.

Mr. Goldstein also announced that the Government and Technology magazine mentioned the Executive Leadership Forum for government IT and ITS professionals. The forum will be held on April 6-7, 1999.

Mr. Goldstein noted that anyone who wanted to receive an electronic copy of the Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council Upcoming Calendar of Events can email him at markg@researchedge.com.

#### 4. Videoconferencing Demonstration

Glenn Stoneman gave the Telecommunications Advisory Group (TAG) a demonstration which he referred to as Videoconferencing 101. Mr. Stoneman stated that he would like the group to think about potential videoconferencing applications.

Mr. Stoneman described Norstan's videoconferencing equipment: 2 cameras, 4 speakers, 2 Sony televisions, and a personal computer (PC). Mr. Stoneman explained that Norstan is using an open architecture PC.

Glenn Stoneman explained that a bridge, otherwise known as a multi-conference control unit, is a device to tie more than 2 videoconferencing systems together. He noted that the bridge for today's videoconference is located in Minneapolis. Mr. Stoneman stated that there are different videoconferencing systems for different size groups.

Glenn Stoneman explained that Norstan integrates voice, video and data. He also noted that where videoconferencing is based on a PC there is the ability to share documents, presentations, spreadsheets or other electronic files to make meetings more productive.

Debbie Kohn asked if we could see the people with whom we were videoconferencing on the same television monitor. Glenn Stonemen replied we could see the person using PIP, (picture in picture). He explained that the right monitor is for displaying data and the left monitor for viewing the conference participants.

Glenn Stoneman explained that VTEL equipment was being used which has "smart" features. He reported that smart features such as smart view or smart document are easy to use. He stated that he would also like to demonstrate the smartboard to demonstrate broader videoconferencing applications. Mr. Stoneman emphasized that he was not attempting to advertise a particular brand

of equipment, but that this was the equipment that Norstan had available.

Mr. Stoneman introduced the pressure sensitive white-board, or smartboard. He also noted that it is easy to upgrade some videoconferencing equipment via CD ROMs.

Debbie Kohn asked if that ease of upgrade is available through other videoconferencing systems other than VTEL. Glenn Stoneman responded that it was not available.

Mr. Stoneman explained SmartTrak as a camera that follows a person's voice and therefore is focused upon the person speaking.

Peter Putterman asked if a non PC workstation such as a UNIX box could work with the videoconferencing equipment. Glenn Stoneman answered no, citing an example of transferring a CAD file from a UNIX box onto the PC so that the CAD file could be seen during a videoconferencing meeting.

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh asked if the videoconferencing equipment was equipped for the hearing impaired. Glenn Stoneman said that you can add lines for the hearing impaired.

Brad Hartig asked if the voice interaction is full duplex. Glenn Stoneman responded that it was.

Peter Putterman asked if there were the capability of broadcasting a videoconference on a local television station. Glenn Stoneman replied there is a video output available through a different feed.

Peter Putterman asked if a telephone interface can be connected to the videoconferencing equipment. Glenn Stoneman answered yes and that voice or phone add-in are very clear.

John Laue noted that this videoconferencing system was impressive, however he thought this technology might be overwhelming for the average citizen. Glenn Stoneman agreed with Mr. Laue by saying that the average citizen is not familiar with this technology. Ms. Walton remarked that the intention of the project is to enable the average user to operate the system.

Mark Goldstein suggested a QuickStart laminated sheet of instructions on how to use the videoconferencing equipment.

Debbie Kohn asked if the money for the Telecommuting/Teleconferencing Program includes the cost of a bridge. Rita Walton responded that the money is intended to cover the cost of a bridge and first year operating costs.

At this time, the point to point videoconference ended and the multi-point videoconference began. The participants were Kevin Lundholm of Norstan, Tom Bracken of Norstan, Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) and members of the MAGTAG.

5. Videoconferencing Status Report

Tom Barr provided a status report on the MAG Videoconferencing status report. Mr. Barr reviewed the project schedule and noted that on February 3-4, 1999 Norstan will be holding videoconferencing kickoff meetings to set the stage for the site visits with member agencies. Mr. Barr also mentioned that the questionnaire for the site visits was an attachment to the MAGTAG agenda. He requested that member agencies review the questionnaire prior to the site visits and be prepared to respond to

the questions raised.

Rita Walton said that the questionnaire is in draft format and that MAG will incorporate any changes from member agencies to enhance the questionnaire.

Tom Barr mentioned that he and Kevin Lundholm would be conducting the site visits. He also noted that some cities may already be using videoconferencing equipment, and that Norstan would attempt to insure compatibility between MAG videoconferencing equipment and other systems already in place. Mr. Barr reported that Norstan will document application requirements, requirements listed in the Request for Proposal (RFP) and provide vendor demonstrations for each of the groups.

Harry Wolfe stated that MAG is arranging interviews or site visits and that some cities have not set a date. Mr. Wolfe noted that all member agencies have been cooperative.

Kevin Lundholm stated that the project time line should be as logical as possible, with logical models based on MAG member agencies' requirements.

Debbie Kohn suggested that site visits with the cities should explore both the minimum and optimal requirements for videoconferencing.

Harry Wolfe asked representatives from the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) to describe some of the lessons they learned from setting up and using videoconferencing.

CVAG representatives explained that they used federal funding for their videoconferencing project. They explained that they have PictureTel equipment, a smaller Swift desktop unit and a larger Concord unit. CVAG representatives mentioned that private industry could rent the videoconferencing room and equipment to cover cost of operating expenses, but to date that had not been done.

CVAG representatives explained that it costs \$55/hour for each unit that is bridged. They also explained that they had to revise some of their procedures for voting and other policies to accommodate The Brown Act, which is the open meeting law in California.

Debbie Kohn asked if CVAG used videoconferencing for their Regional Council meetings. CVAG representatives replied yes, they use videoconferencing for their Regional Council meetings and that it is growing in popularity.

Ms. Kohn asked how CVAG was able to obtain city manager support for videoconferencing. CVAG representatives replied that the city officials learned of the benefits of the program by using the videoconferencing equipment and also emphasized the importance of training sessions. They stressed the importance of having a videoconferencing knowledgeable person assigned to each site.

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh asked if CVAG had used any collaborative equipment in conjunction with videoconferencing. CVAG representatives replied that they used the document camera.

Bill Mitchell asked if they ever hooked up a PC to the videoconferencing equipment. CVAG representatives said they did not.

Harry Wolfe asked CVAG representatives to explain some of the problems they've encountered with videoconferencing. They responded that if they were to undertake the project again, that they would buy a bridge and have more training. They also noted that long distance carriers may not be

easily linked. Another drawback was the unavailability of lines to make a videoconferencing call.

Peter Putterman asked if the politicians had been happy with videoconferencing. CVAG representatives replied yes.

Kevin Lundholm mentioned that in the needs assessment for the MAG Videoconferencing Project it is important for MAG and its member agencies to identify other agencies or jurisdictions that they consult with that could make use of the technology.

Debbie Kohn asked if CVAG allows community based organizations to use their videoconferencing equipment. CVAG representatives replied that they allow it but that to date it had not been used. They also mentioned that it is important to identify locations for videoconferencing so you can establish lines to offices and meeting rooms.

Debbie Kohn asked if CVAG's local jurisdictions do point-to-point videoconferencing. CVAG representatives said they did. Debbie Kohn noted that it would be a good idea to keep a log of how often videoconferencing equipment is used and how many miles were saved as a result of its use.

Rita Walton asked CVAG representatives how much refurbishment to rooms occurred. They replied that jacks were installed but that there was no need to refurbish the rooms.

Debbie Kohn asked about CVAG's jurisdictions' reaction to the ongoing costs. CVAG responded that member agencies pay \$600.00/year for a small system and \$3,600.00/year for a large system. They also noted that the cost is incurred whether or not the equipment is used.

Debbie Kohn asked what CVAG believes will be the future of videoconferencing in their area. CVAG representatives predicted that videoconferencing use will increase as population continues to increase.

Debbie Kohn asked about the obsolescence of videoconferencing equipment. CVAG representatives stated that as long as the technology remains in place, the images would be clear.

## 6. Telecommuting Status Report

Eddie Caine provided a status report on the Telecommuting/Telework Project. He stated that House Bill 2151 encourages more employers to provide the most effective rideshare incentives to employees. He said the proposed legislation would make available \$2 million per year to establish an Alternate Commute Grant Program that employers statewide could apply for to help defray 50% of the actual costs incurred or \$25,000, whichever is less, for subsidizing employees' public transit fares, vanpool expenses and telecommuting and telecommunications equipment purchased by the employer.

Mr. Caine stated that interviews are now finished for the general population survey and that data is available and expected to be finalized by mid-February.

Eddie Caine announced that with Telework 2001, the governor endorsed the Ozone Alert Action Plan asking people to use other modes of transportation on high pollution days. Mr. Caine also noted that the Governor has agreed to be part of a press conference/kick off for the Ozone Alert Plan and to announce the Telework 2001 business fair. Mr. Caine reported that Mary Jo Pitzel may write a

series of articles on telecommuting this spring. Mr. Caine announced that the results of the telework program would be reported next October or November.

Cary Parker asked if there were any guidelines for telecommuting. Eddie Caine responded that many materials are available on telecommuting and that these materials can be obtained by calling 262-RIDE or through RPTA directly.

7. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the MAGTAG will be held on Thursday February 25, 1999 at the MAG Office Building. The remainder of meetings for 1999 are as follows:

- February 25, 1999
- March 25, 1999
- April 22, 1999
- May 27, 1999
- June 24, 1999
- July 22, 1999
- August 26, 1999
- September 23, 1999
- October 28, 1999
- December 9, 1999

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

